

## Interim Science Panel Recommendations

September 27-28, 1999

### Additional Information

October 12, 1999

#### Projects considered but not recommended

The Interim Science Panel initially worked off of a matrix which matched up 1999 proposals with FY 2000 Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan (see attached). The Panel discussed those projects and also considered the remaining 1999 proposals for other opportunities. A brief rationale for not funding some of the highly ranked proposals is presented.

#### Non-native Invasive Species

The Interim Science Panel agreed that continued work on non-native invasive species issues is very important. They focused on two issues that were not funded in the previous round, ballast water and control and eradication of *Arundo donax*.

Of the *Arundo* projects considered, **99-E108 Tamarisk and Arundo on Cache Creek: Removal and Revegetation**, **99-B184 Arundo donax Control on Burch Creek**, and the project recommended for funding **99-E118 Arundo donax Eradication and Coordination**, the project recommended for funding had the most comprehensive approach to eradication and coordination. The funded project had a very broad base of local support and significant cost sharing.

In considering the three ballast water projects (**99-E109, Determining Characteristics of Ballast Water**, **99-E110, Treating Ballast Water Discharges at Existing Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants** and **99-E106, Treatment of Ballast Water: Towards Elimination of Alien Aquatic Introductions into the San Francisco Bay**), the two recommended for funding provided a complementary approach to answering questions about the ballast water focusing first on determining the characteristics of ballast water and also looking at treating ballast water at Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants. These two projects are foundational projects designed to improve our knowledge of the problem and to identify potential remedies.

#### Watershed Projects

The Interim Science Panel recommended funding five additional watershed projects. They considered but did not recommend funding the following projects.

**99-C132 Battle Creek Watershed Stewardship, Phase 2** - The Interim Science Panel recognized the importance of continuing the watershed project in Battle Creek due to the significant investment CALFED has in this watershed; however, CALFED staff are continuing to

work with this group to sign a contract for the previous proposal funded in 1998.

**99-C115 Upper Trinity River Watershed Stewardship Project** - see previous justification

**99-C139 Mokelumne and Cosumnes Rivers Coordination** - duplicative of ongoing or recommended activities

#### **In-Stream Restoration Projects**

To date, CALFED has funded eight in-stream restoration projects in the San Joaquin tributaries for over 14 million dollars. The Interim Science Panel discussed the need to gain a comprehensive understanding of these processes prior to recommending additional funding for these activities. A Ecosystem Restoration Program "white paper" is currently being developed on channel dynamics. A draft of this paper will be available as early as January 2000 and will likely provide much needed guidance on the issues of gravel deficiencies and stream channel needs in the San Joaquin. Five proposals on this topic were submitted under the 1999 proposal solicitation.

**99-B120 Tuolumne River Mining Reach Project 3-Warner Deardorff Segment**

**99-B111 Tuolumne River Special Run Pool 10 Restoration**

**99-B134 Spawning Gravel Introduction, Tuolumne River, La Grange Phase 2**

**99-B194 Tuolumne River Sediment Management and Implementation Plan**

**99-B100 Tuolumne River Sediment Management Plan**

#### **Large Projects Ready for Construction**

A number of future phase projects submitted 1999 proposals for construction phases. The Interim Science Panel recommended comprehensive scientific and technical review for large-scale, phased projects prior to providing construction phase funding. For these large-scale and costly projects, additional review should confirm that the emerging project is scientifically sound, continues to address critical scientific uncertainties, remains a priority action when compared to other types of ecosystem restoration actions, and fits within the developing region-wide perspective.

The Interim Science Panel recognized all existing large, next-phase construction projects as having the potential to address scientific uncertainties and fit within an adaptive management framework. The Panel recommends holding these large construction projects for review in FY 2001. This allows for completion of ERP White Papers currently being developed, completion of comprehensive scientific and technical review prior to construction-phase funding, and completion of comprehensive monitoring plans including peer review.

**99-B139 Phase II: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Delta In-channel Islands** - The ISP felt that this phase II proposal had merit but required external review to determine if indeed the recommended options were appropriate. Part of the reluctance to fund was due to cost and a larger part was due to a perceived need for external review.

**99-B115 Franks Tract/Decker Island Wetlands Habitat Restoration** - The ISP was reluctant to fund this proposal for two reasons: (1) high cost and (2) need for external review to address uncertainty regarding the location and effect of Delta hydrodynamics at the restoration site. The ISP identified that this proposal would not affect the existing agricultural land base in the Delta as subject lands are in state ownership.

**99-B135 Lower Clear Creek Floodway Restoration** - The ISP felt this proposal fit well with the overall CALFED and ERP purposes but decided not to fund the proposal strictly on total cost of the proposal in comparison to the limited amount of restoration dollars available.

**99-A108 Lower Mokelumne River Restoration Program Phase II** - The ISP felt this proposal was very important, particularly in the areas of fish passage and screening of diversions. The ISP observed that the construction elements of this proposal should have additional review such as value engineering. Again, like other important, but costly, projects, the ISP was reluctant to invest a large portion of the available funding at this time.

#### **Mercury Project**

CALFED funded a Mercury project in February of 1999. Last month, a Mercury Peer Review workshop was held to evaluate that study in relation to the overall Mercury issue. Results of that workshop were a recommendation for a possible amendment to that project of one-half to two million dollars. The Interim Science Panel agreed that though this is an important issue, they did not have a report from the Peer Review Workshop or a proposal to evaluate. Due to the large amount of money requested, the Interim Science Panel recommended that CALFED require written justification for the additional funds.

#### **Other Projects**

**99-B144 A Unique Opportunity for Restoration, Research and Education** - The ISP briefly discussed this project and chose not to recommend funding at this time. The cost was a significant factor in the ISP's decision.

**99-B136 Mokelumne Corridor Acquisition, Management and Monitoring at Staten Island** - The ISP discussed this project and identified two reasons not to recommend funding at this time. The most significant reason was the high cost in comparison to available funding. Secondly, ISP identified that conservation easements for managed wetlands in the Delta was not consistent with CALFED's Stage 1a actions. In the longer-term, the ISP felt that this project had great merit, particularly in the area of set back levees and the creation of shallow water habitats in the Mokelumne River corridor.

CALFED received two proposals to improve the pesticide usage database of the Department of Pesticide Regulation (**99-D125 Improve DPR Database, and 99-D108 DPR Pesticide Use Data on Internet Site**). There was general agreement that information on pesticide use would

be valuable, and that is important to bring such data into a database and put it on line. The Interim Science Panel did not recommend funding either of the two proposals because they were ranked relatively low by the technical review panel and, based on a cursory review by the Interim Science Panel members, did not appear to be adequate proposals.

The Interim Science Panel concluded that the proposals did not indicate a working familiarity with the raw data and the issues involved in moving the data from its present state into a database. Further, the claims made in D125 as to potential uses of the data did not demonstrate a clear knowledge of the user community. To the extent that DPR demonstrates that the raw data is fully ready for transfer, then the database development phase should move forward. However, DPR, which is most familiar with the content of the raw data needs to be fully involved in its accurate interpretation and use.

Some Interim Science Panel members expressed concern that maintaining and improving DPR's database should be a routine agency function. Also, it is not clear if CALFED is necessarily the only, or most appropriate sponsor for this administrative work. They discussed making this a Directed Program and ultimately decided to not fund it at this time.

**99-B138 Modeling the Influence of Restoration Scenarios on Channel and Floodplain Morphology** - The ISP briefly discussed this proposal and did not recommend funding at this time. The proposal needed to be better integrated with other similar efforts on the Sacramento River. The ISP observed that these are the types of large scale modeling efforts that are needed for a robust ecosystem restoration program.

**99-B168 Venice Island Potato Slough Habitat Creation Demonstration Project** - The ISP briefly discussed this proposal and did not recommend funding at this time. One concern was the cost to create 4 acres of wetland and midchannel islands.

**99-B160 Developing an Integrated Model for River Restoration and Water Acquisition in the Central Valley** - The ISP discussed this proposal in conjunction with **99-B166, Focused Action to Develop Ecologically based Hydrologic Models in the San Joaquin Basin**, and the ISP recommended funding 99-B166 and not funding 99B-160.

**99-B141 Dead Horse Island Levee Restoration Project**

**99-B163 Lisbon District Levee and Habitat Protection Project**- These two projects were considered as projects under the FY 2000 Implementation Plan to potentially address the programmatic action "Ecosystem Restoration Levee Setback Feasibility Study". Neither project directly addressed the specific FY 2000 programmatic action, or under the limited funding available, met the Interim Science Panel's criteria for recommending projects for funding.

**99-B173 Local Economic Impacts of Public Land Acquisition in the Sacramento River** - this project was funded by the CVPIA Anadromous Fish Restoration Program.

**99-A103 Biological Evaluation of Suisun Marsh Diversions**

**99-A112 Hydraulic Testing and Screens and Small Diversions in the Delta** - These two projects were considered as projects under the FY 2000 Implementation Plan to potentially address the programmatic action to "Evaluate the need to Screen Small Diversions in the South Delta". Neither project directly addressed the specific FY 2000 programmatic action, or under the limited funding available, met the Interim Science Panel's criteria for recommending projects for funding.